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## In The Nation

### Rival Candidates as Foreign Policy Consultants

By ARTHUR KROCK

WASHINGTON, April 23—In his expanded discussion today of his plan to prevent a "knock-down, drag-out" foreign policy debate in the 1964 Presidential campaign, Mr. Johnson proposed the role of Administration "consultant" to all the Republicans who aspire to lead their party's effort to defeat him for election next November. The spacious scope of this new method of effecting nonpartisanship in foreign policy is measured by the fact that even the late Senator Vandenberg, the Republican who induced his party to accept the principle, limited the concept of its practice to consultation between the Administration in power and the leaders of the Opposition in Congress.

If Vandenberg ever envisaged a system in which aspirants for the Presidential nomination of the party out of power would meet in regular session with the President in office, to advise him on the formulation or conduct of foreign policy, there is no specific record of this in his papers. Nor is there any record that he conceived of projecting to the President and the nominee against him the "relationship" between the President and the Senate leader that is imposed by the constitutional fact that the Senate is the President's partner in the field of international policy.

President Johnson's concept, as he elaborated on it today, proposed both of these projections. "I would like," he said, "to confer with them [the principal Republican pre-convention rivals] and have their suggestions from time to time as what the wise course to pursue is [in foreign affairs], I would like to reflect on these moves before I make them, and I would like to consider everyone's judgment. . . . I would like to have a relationship with the Republican nominee similar to that I had with President Eisenhower during the eight years when I was [Senate Majority] leader. . . ."

The sentiment is admirable, the objective desirable and the attitude sincere. If all of those Republicans from whom his opponent may be chosen, and the one who finally is chosen, want to have their foreign policy facts "direct from the horse's mouth" the gate is open. They will be given all the secret information—that is "possible" to give them—from which the President's policies and acts in international affairs are derived. And "none of us will use any secret information in the campaign."

#### Vandenberg Stated the Dilemma

But, as Vandenberg examined the much more limited procedure, between two coordinate and existing branches of the Government—the Executive and Congress—he came to inquire if "nonpartisanship in foreign policy" is permanently possible? "I am trying to figure out," he wrote, "whether the equally important and indispensable maintenance of a two-party political system does not inevitably collide with the foregoing? ("The Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg," Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1952). The letter continued:

. . . I am a candidate for reelection on the Republican ticket on Nov. 5. On the same day that I receive President Truman's commission as an American delegate . . . to the United Nations—a commission which says that he "reposes special trust and confidence in my integrity and ability"—his party's National Committee sends two of its most important orators . . . into Michigan to seek my party's defeat in general and my defeat in particular. Bang! "Foreign policy" is back in politics. Do I keep still. . . . Or do I shove "foreign policy" still further into politics—and probably for keeps?

To still further complicate the situation, if I am defeated it is the Administration's foreign policy which really takes the licking because I am so closely identified with it [as Ambassador Lodge is today]. Yet, if I win, I may contribute to a major political defeat for the Administration.

This is the problem which will confront in much greater degree any Republican aspirant for the Presidential nomination who, in a time when the country is at least formally at peace, accepts the role of Presidential "consultant." Mr. Johnson has proposed. And in even larger degree it would confront the nominee of the San Francisco convention.